

Claims

1. In connection with a computer including an operating system that has an interface for communicating with a screen saver, said interface providing for screen saver communications intended to selectively result in
5 screen saver activation and screen saver deactivation, a method of detecting a user's presence at a workstation including the computer, said method comprising:

- (a) detecting the screen saver communications;
- (b) determining that the user is not present at the workstation when
10 the detected communications are intended to result in screen saver activation; and,
- (c) determining that the user is present at the workstation when the detected communications are intended to result in screen saver deactivation.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
15 (d) reporting the determinations of steps (b) and (c) to a telephony system.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the telephony system is operatively connected to a packet-switched network.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein step (d) includes:
20 formatting messages containing the reported determinations; and,
transmitting the messages to the telephony system.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the messages are Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) messages.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
25 (d) reporting the determination of steps (b) and (c) to an instant messaging client operative on the computer.

7. In a computer including an operating system that has an interface for communicating with a screen saver, said interface providing for screen saver communications intended to selectively result in screen saver activation and screen saver deactivation, a module for detecting a user's presence at a workstation including the computer, said module comprising:
- 5 means for detecting the screen saver communications; and, ✓
means for determining: (i) that the user is not present at the workstation when the detected communications are intended to result in screen saver activation; and, (ii) that the user is present at the workstation when the detected
- 10 communications are intended to result in screen saver deactivation.
8. The module of claim 7, further comprising:
means for reporting the determinations of the determining means to a telephony system.
9. The module of claim 8, wherein the telephony system is
- 15 operatively connected to a packet-switched network.
10. The module of claim 8, wherein reporting means includes:
means for formatting messages containing the reported determinations;
and,
means for transmitting the messages to the telephony system.
- 20 11. The module of claim 10, wherein the messages are Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) messages.
12. The module of claim 7, further comprising:
means for reporting the determination of the determining means to an instant messaging client operative on the computer.
- 25 13. A workstation comprising:
a computer having a visual display screen and an input device, both
operatively connected to the computer;

a operating system maintained on the computer for administering operation of the computer;

5 a screen saver regulated by the operating system so as to selectively be in one of an activated or deactivated state, said screen saver being in the deactivated state when the input device is being used and in the activated state when the input device goes unused for a specified duration of time, such that while in said activated state the screen saver controls the display screen to depict at least one of no image or a non-static image; and,

10 presence detection means for detecting a user's presence at the workstation from the state of the screen saver.

14. The workstation of claim **13**, further comprising:

communications means operatively connected to a telecommunications network for exchanging communications over the network, wherein the communications means receives information regarding the users presence at the workstation from the presence detection means.

15. The workstation of claim **14**, wherein the communications means includes an instant messaging client operative on the computer.

16. The workstation of claim **14**, wherein the communications means includes a telephony system.

20 **17.** The workstation of claim **14**, wherein the communication means includes an Internet Protocol (IP) telephone.

18. The workstation of claim **14**, wherein the telecommunications network is a packet-switched network.